

Ramsey Mortuary Chapels Heritage and Archive Centre

By Jane Yardley – Chair, Friends of Ramsey Mortuary Chapels

My goodness, what strange times we live in. I hope that as you read this, that you and your loved ones are all safe and well.

Isn't it great to have the **INFORMER** back at last! and it was so nice to be invited to contribute a piece about the chapels.

Although we, like all of Ramsey's Heritage attractions, have been closed to the public, we have still been very busy, expanding our archive and trying to keep the cemetery tidy. When we do open however, I think that you will be in for a pleasant surprise. The false ceiling in the Anglican Chapel has been removed and the original Victorian one uncovered. It was quite a risk as none of us knew what we might find

underneath, but my, it was definitely the right thing to do. Most of the ceiling was intact, with only the central part missing and a few bits of damage here and there. No spiders! Just one solitary butterfly, which gently flew down and I was able to pick it up and pop it outside to freedom. But what an amazing amount of dust!

A great big thank you must go to Ramsey's Mayor, Steve Corney, Matthew Marshal, and Bryan Leach who volunteered their services free of charge to carry out the work. All we have had to pay for are the materials used, wooden boards, stain, etc. which with your help has been paid for through our fundraising activities. A gothic chandelier, kindly bought for us by Ramsey Rotary, has just been put up, as work has started again after the lock down and another one, again purchased by us through fund raising, will soon be joining it. It's a big job, but when completed will look fantastic.

Of course whilst lock down has been in process it has been very difficult to raise funds, but thanks to the sterling efforts of volunteer Maurice Margetts, who has been selling things for us online, some of which he has bought and restored himself and several kind "friends" who have given us donations, we have managed to stay solvent. Also just before the virus reared its ugly head, I was asked to visit Ramsey's Hospital Charity Shop, you can imagine my surprise when I was given a donation of £300 towards the restoration of the chapels, so unexpected and so very kind.

You will probably have seen by now that both the Ramsey Indoor Market and Hope for the Nations Home and Vintage shops are up and running again. The Mortuary Chapels have stalls in both locations, where we sell items donated to us by you. It's a real help to us and much appreciated by us all.

The kindness and generosity of local people never fails to amaze me and another example is that of Pete Thompson of PC Clinic. The chapel's old laptop had completely "given up the ghost" to coin a phrase and was useless and on an off chance I took

it into him. He managed to sort out all the problems and it is now running perfectly thanks to his expertise. When I went to collect it, Pete refused all payment, saying that it was his contribution to the chapels. What stars you all are!

We have been drawing up a plan of the cemetery so that we can locate the burial plot of everyone interred there, not an easy job as the first one was in 1860 and over the years a lot of the information seems to have been lost. We were contacted by Mr Mike Robinson who wanted to know if we could help him. He had moved up to Huntingdonshire from London and when he started to research his family tree sometime later, he was surprised to find that his grandmother, Ruth Shemelds lived in Ramsey at one time, but had no idea where she was buried. Fortunately, we could help him and although there were no headstones, we were able to pinpoint her burial place and also found those of two other relatives as well. Mr Robinson, with his wife Barbara and children, Greg and Stacy, came to the cemetery to lay flowers on her grave and we spent a most enjoyable time with them and were also able to

show them where she lived. If you recognise the name and have any information about her, would you contact me and I can pass it on to him.

We think that it is important to look after the cemetery and keep it tidy but at the same time we like to help the wildlife as much as possible. Mick Arthur and the men from RamShed have made us some lovely bee and bird boxes for the cemetery and our two youngest volunteers, Emily and Abbie, not forgetting Chester the dog, put them



up for us with a little help from their granddad Maurice.

On Saturday 12th September, we will be having a Tombola Stall and Lucky Dip on the Great Whyte at 10am. Weather permitting! But if it's raining then it will be on the following Saturday.

All items were wrapped pre virus and strict measures will be in place to keep you safe, so we look forward to seeing you.

When it comes down to it, the only things that really matter are kindness and friendship.

Keep safe and thank you for your continued support for our project.



RAMSEY MORTUARY CHAPELS RESTORATION PROJECT

**GIANT TOMBOLA
3 TICKETS £1
plus
LUCKY DIP
50p each**

on the

**GREAT WHYTE, RAMSEY
SATURDAY 12th SEPTEMBER
10am to 12 noon**

**All items prepared pre virus,
safety measures will be in place.**